

India's V-Day: Vaccination drive set to begin on Jan 16

Date Kept After Uttarayan, Other Festivals Next Wk

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New Delhi: India will launch its vaccination drive against Covid-19 on January 16 after the forthcoming festivals of Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal and Magh Bihu at a time when India's infections are low as compared to several nations witnessing fresh spikes.

The decision on the roll-out date was taken at a high-level meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday to review the status of Covid-19 in the country and preparedness of states and Union territories for the massive vaccination programme that in its first phase targets 30 crore people.

"Everything is in line. We are hoping to vaccinate a few lakh people across several

1ST ORDER TO BE MOSTLY COVISHIELD

► Meeting chaired by PM Modi decides that Saturday, January 16, will be the date of India's vaccination drive launch

► Health ministry set to sign vaccine supply order for first tranche of 10 crore doses. It will be funded through PM-Cares Fund

► The first order to mostly comprise Covishield vaccine



supplied by Serum Institute. Some stocks of Covaxin from Bharat Biotech will also be bought, says an official

► The 2nd mock drill conducted on Friday covered around 550 districts and tested the Co-WIN system and protocols for reporting and redress of adverse events

► First phase of inoculation will target 30 crore people

thousand sites on the first day itself," an official said, adding stocks will reach four major depots soon after the supply order is signed.

Sources said the health ministry is set to sign the supply order with the first tranche of 10 crore doses funded through PM-Cares Fund. "Though bulk of the order will be for Covishield (developed by Oxford University-Astra Zeneca), the government is also likely to buy some stocks of Covaxin from Bharat Bio-

tech," an official said.

Initially, around three crore healthcare and frontline workers will be inoculated, followed by those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population with co-morbidities, estimated at around 27 crore.

The vaccination programme might also be ramped up, depending on status of the infection spread and supply of vaccine.

On January 3, the drug regulator granted emergency use authorisation to two vac-

India ready to protect world: PM

India is ready to help protect the world with not one but two 'Made in India' coronavirus vaccines, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday as he asserted that the world was watching how the country conducts the globe's biggest vaccination programme. In his address at the inauguration of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, Modi said, "In the corona era, today India is among the countries with the lowest mortality and highest recovery rate in the world. Today, India is ready to protect humanity with not one, but two Made in India corona vaccines." **P10 & 12**

cines - Covishield and Covaxin - both being manufactured in India by Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech, respectively.

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2nd round of dry run carried out on Friday

► Continued from P1



The PM is also scheduled to meet chief ministers on Monday to discuss the plan for the roll-out, ahead of the final launch.

The vaccination exercise is underpinned by the principles of people's participation (Jan Bhagidari), utilising experience of elections (booth strategy) and Universal Immunisation Program (UIP). There will be no compromise on existing healthcare services, especially national programmes and primary healthcare and scientific and regulatory norms will be maintained, the government said. All SOPs will be followed for orderly and smooth implementation, it added.

The Centre also conducted a second round of countrywide dry run on Friday. The mock drill was conducted in around 550 districts to test the feasibility of carrying out vaccination in several centres across the country and to test whether the Co-WIN system and the protocol for reporting and redressing adverse events after immunisation are fool-proof.